THOUGHTS

AND

RECOLLECTIONS.

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AND

RECOLLECTIONS

BY

ONE OF THE LAST CENTURY

Αληθείαν ζητῶ, ὑφ' ἧς οὐδεὶς πωποτε ἐβλάβη.
Marcus Antoninus

Speak truth and shame the devil
Proverb

LONDON
JOHN MURRAY ALBEMARLE STREET
MDCCCXXV

[redacted]

ADVERTISEMENT.

These Thoughts, though hastily thrown together, have not been hastily adopted. The grain has been frequently winnowed and examined. Whether it be fit for seed it is for others to pronounce.

The reader may perhaps think that I might have imagined some better system of arrangement of my matter

.. .he toyman who strings his beads for sale according to some fanciful gradation or contrast of colour; which, after all, must be unstrung, if they are to be made available to any useful purpose.

ERRATA.

Page 58, *note, for* country *read* county.
60, line 9, *for* capital *read* capitol, *&c.*
132, line 1, after trial, insert a comma instead of a period.

CONTENTS.

THOUGHTS,

&c. &c.

ON THE INTERNAL EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY.

Captain Medwin mentions a strong impression having been made upon Lord Byron by a *little* work in defence of Christianity, which (judging from some observations which he addressed to Mr. Shelley) he appeared to consider as unanswerable.

scription, and (its arguments being strictly logical) is, I think, absolutely unanswerable.

It is curious to observe, how this writer's reasoning as to the fitness of the Christian religion *alone*, to all climates, to all the orders, to all the wants and all the passions of man, has been illustrated of late years. If there was a region of the world, in which it seemed impossible for Christianity to take root, it was Otaheite. *There*, all

but its enthusiastic advocates foretold it was to fail, yet *there* it was most easily planted, *there* it took most immediate hold of the soil, and *there* it immediately shot into all the luxuriance of the mustard-tree in the parable.

It is impossible to conceive a more apparently hopeless project than that of introducing Christianity into Otaheite; yet there are those who, with this success before their eyes, think that it is impossible to disseminate it in India. I do not here, it will be observed, speak with reference to a late ill-conceived attempt to plant it in that country; but with reference to the pos-

indulged with the possession of more than one wife. These people forget, that there is in Heathen India a very large cast (that of the Nayres) which contents itself with a fractional share of a woman; for four of these men have but one wife among them. Nor is this a mountain-race, among whom woman enjoys a longer reign. The Nayres are the nobles of the Malabar provinces.

CATHOLICISM.

THERE is no subject on which even the more instructed cast of English is more miserably misinformed than on the tenets of Catholicism. Almost every one, for instance, from the Poet Laureate down to the parish clerk, believes in the grant of prospective indulgences. Yet not only is the thing

repentance and *future abstinence from sin.* Indeed the form in which our priests give their general absolution is taken from the practice of the Roman church.

This principle was not only recognized (though it may have been departed from in darker ages) by

Dante in the fourteenth century and founded upon canons, but is the opinion, assurance *and practice* of all well informed Catholics in the present times; and I recollect well a conversation upon this subject with a lady of singular frankness in Italy. Having observed that she was a very exact performer of religious duties, I, indiscreetly enough, expressed some surprize at hearing her state that she never confessed herself. Her answer was, that, as she had not the resolution to change her mode of life, (what this was may be inferred,) she did not choose to add the sin of sacrilege to the catalogue of her other transgressions.

informed may believe confession and absolution to be a complete and not a conditional quittance of scores, as far as penance is concerned, I imagine, may be equally true. This false opinion may also, and I dare say does, make these sacraments sometimes practically mischievous; yet they are not so to the extent which we believe; for we seem to attach an odd idea to the effect of absolution. We conceive it to be an absolution from the torments of hell, thus freeing men from the

fear of future punishment; whereas it only respects those of purgatory: so that an absolved Catholic is in no better plight than an absolved protestant. Whereas an absolved Protestant (who is absolved out and out, even from hell itself) is in a much better condition than an absolved Catholic. I say this on the supposition, that the avowed doctrines of the English and Roman churches are held as true by their respective professors.

The doctrine of the Romish church certainly produces many salutary, if it produces any of the mischievous effects ascribed to it.

the banditti-system in Italy: but this writer, in assigning such an improbable cause for the mischief, does not mention a positive alleviation of the evil, which is afforded by the Catholic religion; I mean a condition, universally annexed to absolution, to wit, the reparation (where possible) of wrongs, inflicted by the penitent. Hence retribution is most common on the part of robbers in Catholic countries; and an English lady is now living, who had nearly two thirds of her diamonds re-

stored to her, of which she had been despoiled by Italian banditti.

The real mischief of confession among the higher orders would seem to be the pollution of the youthful mind by the suggestion of crime. Another, and distinguished, literary Italian lady told me that, when a girl, she drew lots with her companions, which of them should confess fornication, in order to ascertain the meaning of the word; and that another girl, having been rated by the priest for not making a full exposition of her faults, procured a little work which enumerated all possible offences. Confessing thus by book, she accused herself of some

Having stated that it is not fair to attribute tenets to a church which it solemnly disavows; a position which I think every one must deem reasonable; I ought also, in fairness, to accompany this with another, which, if it is not as obviously, is as substantially, true. This is, that a church is not always to be judged by its apparent tenets; because one may be qualified by others of an opposite or qualifying nature. What, for instance, could be more ex-

travagant than a Catholic's maintaining that the church of England believes in transubstantiation, because it teaches in its catechism, that 'the body and blood of Christ is verily, and indeed, taken in the Lord's supper'? Or what is more unreasonable than a Calvinist's maintaining that the *spirit* of the church of England is Calvinistic, because one of its articles seems to avow the doctrine of predestination, in contradiction to its general language?

It is true also that a church sometimes admits things, in particular times and places, which are at variance with its doctrines. A curious exemplifi-

cation of the spirit of this may be seen at present in two Roman Catholic countries, whose practice upon a most important point is diametrically opposite that of the rest of Catholic Europe. Every one knows that the Roman Catholic church, considering matrimony as a sacrament, does not allow of divorce *à vinculo matrimonii;* and upon this, its practice accords strictly with the principle, except in the Venetian State and, I believe, in Poland. In these, divorce, bottomed on some fiction, rendering the marriage void *ab initio,* is easily obtained; but admitted nowhere else. I mention these exceptions to the doctrines, held by a church, in the love of candour,

but deny that such exceptions can be made against that which I have averred to be the principle and practice of the church of Rome.

The exceptions which I have exemplified show how a religion may be influenced, as I have said, by the manners of a place, and of course it is equally modified by those of a particular age, or by particular circumstances. It is the neglect of this consideration which misleads us in our reasoning, with respect to past, present and future. We abhor the Roman Catholics for kindling the fires of Smithfield, but forget that Cranmer, who perished in them, had been himself an active member of

tarians' ears; and surely he who is attacked with a switch may avenge himself with a club. The enormities, thus reciprocated, are not then surely to be attributed to the spirit of any of these three religions, but to that of the times. Their respective professors were rigid but honest men, who thought their modes of worship allowed of no compromise, even in questions of discipline, and who would neither give nor take quarter, in what they looked upon as a holy warfare.

The position I before laid down, of a religion often taking its colouring from external circumstances, applies, as I said, to the present, and probably to the future, as well as to the past. Why are English Catholics in general so unlike those of the Continent, whether in France, Italy, Germany or Switzerland? For the same reason that the English differs from the foreign Calvinist, whether in Germany, in Switzerland, or in Scotland. The professors of both these religions, with us, take their character less from religious than from political circumstances.

It is a common thing among us to attribute the state of morals in every

respecting confession, I might, perhaps, be inclined to this opinion; but facts witness differently. The upper and middling classes of Italy are certainly loose in their morals; but I should say that the peasantry of Italy was the chastest in Europe.* Now I think it

* The Italian peasantry in general I should say deserve this character, but I speak more especially of those of the Venetian state. Here a young peasant and his mistress *keep company*, as our people term it, for years without making a false step; while, in England, there are *many* districts, where marriage is never thought of till

must be allowed that this cast is *that* whose manners are most likely to be influenced by the religion they profess. But in arguing this point, I had rather reason from instances which the generality of my readers are better qualified to estimate. I would say then, was Protestant Berlin, in which political causes have now wrought so singular a change, twenty years ago, purer in its morality than Catholic Vienna? or is there any essential difference between Catholic or Protestant Switzerland?

it is necessary to justify previous indiscretion. I have often heard Venetians of the upper classes testifying with wonder to this fact.

as the English are unjust in their opinions of the present Catholic priesthood, so they are still more prejudiced with regard to that of more ancient times; and even Mr. Hallam (perhaps, the most impartial writer that any age or country has produced) appears to me to have fallen into this error.

A very ingenious friend of mine once observed to me: "To what, except to the influence of the church, can we ascribe Europe not being still in the

same state in which Circassia is now?" For me, I know no other substantial cause, *but* the beneficial influence of the Church: for, if we are told that Europe was never left in the same state of utter darkness, I ask who but her priests collected and perpetuated such feeble lights as survived the extinction of the Roman and Grecian empire? Who were the sole depositaries of knowledge through so many ages but these priests, and to whom but them are we indebted for whatever most softened the manners of the earlier ages?

What spread agriculture and civilization through the whole of Europe

* It is hardly necessary to observe that agriculture and commerce are often *forced* by associations, with much *present* loss, but *after* benefit. For instance, the East India Company, in the conviction that it must in the end succeed, long drove a losing trade with China, which is now one of the great marts for English cloths.

The capital and resources of convents were in the same manner directed to the improvement of agriculture, and were by land what chartered trading companies are by sea.

Other benefits, and almost of equal value, were conferred by monasteries on their neighbourhood, and which may yet be witnessed in the wild vicinage of Vallombrosa and Laverna. On the other hand, much of the present distress in Aus-

the industry of individuals could never have succeeded in effecting?

Europe, however, was often as much indebted, in other points, to the individual wisdom as to the collective influence of this order. Is not England, for instance, principally indebted to the wisdom of Langton for the excellent provisions of *Magna Charta*? which could not have been framed but with his assistance, and in which the great body of the English church concurred; and shall we yet continue

trian Italy has, I have no doubt, risen out of the destruction of these charitable foundations, before any better system was substituted for that which was overthrown.

over the Asiatics, but that God has willed it should be so; and he told Boswell that he was in earnest in so saying, and could assign no better cause. He would have spoken more accurately, in my opinion, if he had attributed the fact to God's having willed that the Christian religion should be the law of Europe; and perhaps its Catholic form was that which was best adapted to its earlier ages. Leaving this aside, Christianity,

which, in its immediate or remote consequences, tends to the advancement of man, while the Mohammedan or Heathen religions of Asia necessarily tend to his debasement, seems to have given Europe its pre-eminence.

Nothing is more common than the complaint that they should be in possession of so large a portion of the landed revenues of the kingdom. Yet what can be more ridiculous than this lament? I am not here about to defend the policy of their mode of payment by tithes; but will simply remark, in passing, that it would be more fair to consider these as a condition upon which men hold their lands, than as a tax levied upon them. I proceed to the main point.

As to this; what does it signify, in point of pecuniary interest, to me, or to any other English subject, whether the Clergy, or hereditary owners of the soil, are in possession of much of the landed revenue, which is begrudged to the Church?

On the other side, is not the cause of education, religion, and morality, more promoted by such a distribution, than by the same number of squires being fed upon the rich lands which form its endowments?

Yet to what do we attach such importance as to the first of these great desiderata?

Was indeed lately so general and loud a cry, that every one who ventured to object to the scheme, which was some years ago adopted by acclamation in this country, would have almost risked being stoned for his illiberality and presumption. The experiment has, however, been tried, and, I believe, is confessed not only not to have verified the sanguine expectations which were formed from it, but to have been productive of mischief. For, I think, we may be warranted in attributing the

increase of juvenile delinquencies to the source from which it certainly dates.

No nation perhaps ever went so suddenly and universally mad as the English did on this subject. "The Scotch were an educated, and therefore a moral, people, and we were to become like them." It was forgot that the Scotch did not start suddenly into an enlightened people, that they were educated under their own priesthood, and *that*, a priesthood especially fitted for the instruction and guidance of the poor, who, in teaching them to read, taught them as well what they *ought* to read. The English did not take these points,

cation; as if intellectual education (if only considered) was not to be considered as a mean as well as an end—as a mode of strengthening, if I may so express myself, the intellectual muscle—and as if it did not lose half its value if it did not open the road to further progress in that great road to knowledge, to which it should serve as a gate.

Did the system proposed promise any of the good and great results

which, in my opinion, are to be reasonably expected from education?

Is the withdrawing children of a very early age, for a great part of the day, from parental control, and folding them in large flocks, with a very inadequate superintendence, likely to improve the morals of infancy? Are not the bad passions rather likely to heat by contact, and does not such a reunion offer facilities for the suggestion and concert of crime?

Is the system of education itself the best calculated to answer the mere ends proposed by it? "Perhaps not," will say its more rational advocates;

swer *as far as it goes;* and, as a popular wholesale mode of education, somewhat resembling the medical practice of an hospital, I will allow the merit of the system. But what shall we say of such a plan having been adopted at one of the great public schools, at which the youth of the English gentry are educated for the highest and most difficult professions? Is not this entirely to lose sight of the best object of education, the disciplining the mind by long habits of application, and

preparing it for the future acquisition of knowledge? What we learn at school, however extensive our juvenile studies, will, comparatively speaking, be little; but we learn there much indeed, in acquiring the means of learning more.

But not only the means of learning more are not acquired by this mechanical system of education, but what *is* learned, is learned by rote.

While, however, I utterly, for such reasons as I have given, despise the Bell or Lancastrian method, as a mean of liberal education, I am by no means disposed to defend *that* universally adopted in our classical schools.

ru, as in acquiring what is turned to no account. We learn grammar twice, the first time mechanically; and, having no understanding of its object, no associations to hang our recollections upon, we learn it the first time in vain, and have the needless trouble of relearning it, to the exclusion of some other useful study, in making its application.

Surely no one can deny this. Surely no one will tell me that he ever understood what he was about in learning

the *propria quæ maribus*, and the *as in præsenti*, till he relearned them in the authors whom he was attempting to construe. For myself, I perfectly recollect that my first insight into what had then been a three years' exclusive study, was gained by a ridiculous accident, which may very well serve as an illustration of my argument. The master detected me in the act of beating another little boy and inflicted summary justice upon me, observing at the same time "that he should now resolve my foolish questions about a verb deponent; for that I was one myself,—active and passive—as beating and beaten." This striking illustration was the only thing that ever threw the

[redacted]gestion, that is, in making its application.

A consideration of the point I have been discussing naturally leads me into some reflections upon

SCHOOLS.

THERE are certainly many arguments in favour of public schools. There are also some very solid objections to them, which are too obvious to dilate upon; though I think the reasons in favour of such establishments certainly predominate. Whichever is to be preferred, (public or domestic education,) there is one thing of which I feel perfectly persuaded: to wit, that there is no medium,—that education, should be, strictly speaking, public or private,—and that no institu-

the controul of public opinion; and that the second is (if there be such a thing) an absolute despotism, in the most rigorous interpretation of the words. Hence the private schoolmaster, provided he accomplish his object of a successful administration, is indifferent as to the means. He accordingly encourages *espionnage* and treachery, and appeals to all the baser passions of his pupils for the accomplishment of his objects.

Thus, at the private school, kept by a very well-intentioned man, where I spent seven years, (and they were the most miserable of my life,) if a party were engaged in any mischief, they were encouraged in giving up their leaders, and were promised impunity (which however they very often did not obtain) upon perpetrating this act of perfidy. If the tiles were broken on a neighbouring malt-house, and the delinquents remained undiscovered, the weekly allowance of all was stopped till the damage was made good. A small deposit of money for the purchase of English books for the school was once stolen, and all the boys were examined, harassed, and the lesser

more would have been done to them I know not; but luckily the persecution was stopped by an unexpected circumstance. The father of one of these boys was an attorney, who appeared in vindication of his son, and exacted an acknowledgement from the master in open school, that he had no grounds for suspecting his child's innocence.

Almost every one who has been

educated at a private school has a similar tale to relate of it.—But are not worse vices learned at a public school than at a private one?—I do not think so. The vices of a public school are of a more generous character, as influenced by public opinion, (for boys as well as master feel the controul of this,) and these may generally be eradicated; but mean propensities are weeds, which spring out of a corrupted soil, and are reproduced by the same cause which engendered them; that is to say, by the deterioration of the ground itself.

ARE almost as much a species of mania, as schools. The present is a restless age. It will leave nothing to government; nay, it will leave nothing to Providence. It will convert the Jews and force even Roman Catholics to read the bible without a comment.

Yet can a much worse system of morals be learned than that which is to be found in the Old Testament by those who look to it,—not as a law

given at a very barbarous period to a particular people, under particular circumstances,—not as the basis of the perfect and beautiful system which is built upon it, but as a present guide of life and applicable to all nations? Yet such is the bias of the vulgar at large, and it is natural; for the ignorant recur willingly to that which most excites or seconds their passions. As my Uncle Toby, when he resorted to his bible, opened it at the Siege of Jericho, so the rebel turns with delight to the dethronement of a king, and the persecuting fanatic to the slaughter of the Amalekites. The Covenanters, who are so admirably pourtrayed in the Scotch novels, as their author

woman, and to the putting the Philistines to the edge of the sword, when there was a question of sparing or killing fellow Christians.

Are not these assemblies likely to create discussions and differences, among all denominations of Christians, and have they not indeed already done so? Have they not already furnished an arena in which members of our own church have contended, one with ano-

ther? and are not these societies now warring against the Catholics? Yet these are the assemblies which cabinet ministers have united to patronize!

IRELAND.

There is perhaps nothing more strongly illustrative of the spirit of the English colonists of this island than the fact of their having always kept themselves distinct from the aboriginal inhabitants; whereas, even the most domineering conquerors have usually acted on a different feeling. Thus, the Normans, (as we may collect from our earliest romances,) identified themselves with the Britons, adopting all the legends of their Arthurs and Launcelots. In the same way the heads

of Highland families, though principally of Saxon, Norse or Norman blood, almost all pretend to a Gaëlic descent. The Anglo-Irish only deviate from this natural and politic system so universally adopted.

THE POOR LAWS.

It is a mercy that these were not cast into the fire under the impulse of the general detestation which was conceived for them some few years ago; yet it may be reasonably suspected that much of the misery of the country to which I was last referring, may be

traced, among other notorious causes, to their absence. It is at least a curious coincidence in favour of such a supposition that the two of the three united kingdoms, to wit, England and Scotland,* which have a permanent provision for their poor, are in a flourishing situation, and that Ireland, which has no poor-laws, is plunged in the utmost misery.

The way in which I conceive that the absence of poor-laws tends to increase the wretchedness of Ireland, is

* It is a mistake to suppose that Scotland is without a permanent provision for her poor; though it is not of the same description as in England.

...use of this evil, which grows most especially out of the subdivision of property. But the subdivision of property is necessarily counteracted by the tax paid by proprietors for the maintenance of the poor; a case easily demonstrated. For, suppose the property of an Irish parish to be in three or four possessors, these are led by pecuniary and by political interests to let their lands in as many small farms as is possible; but if these three or four great proprietors had to pro-

vide for all the poverty created by this mischievous stimulus to population, they would find it their interest to follow the example of the English landholder.

I mention this because I conceive it to be one of the most essential, though not one of the most obvious, causes of Irish misery, always excluding political ones, of which I at such a moment would willingly keep clear.

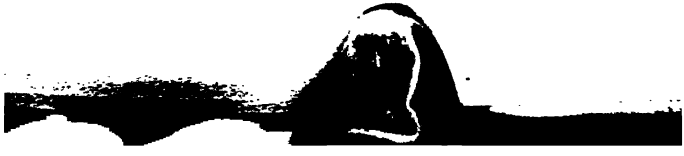
In adverting to the

I SHALL perhaps be accused of departing from such a principle; but what I have to say is of the same nature as my last observation, and cannot lead to mischief.

The Irish Catholic priesthood, though necessarily better educated and of much better conduct than some casts of the Irish resident gentry, is left to associate only with the lowest order of society. What wide and destructive consequences arise from this

may easily be conceived; I prefer pointing out the advantages which might be derived from a contrary line of conduct. An English officer, by opinion and by family connections united with the Protestant party, and who commanded a disturbed district in Ireland, at a period of much danger, assured me that he found infinite advantage in cultivating a good understanding with the priests. He declared to me that they enabled him to possess himself of many mischievous disturbers of the peace, and that he lived under a perfect assurance that he should have information from them of any attempt on his own life, or the public safety.

THE first principle of this science is represented to be as universally true, as that of hydrostatics. *Things find their own level,* like water. Without disputing the truth of this supposed axiom, I may remark, that those who preach this doctrine, do not carry it to its natural extent, and assimilate it to water throughout; in which case the comparison would be as true, as it would be complete. Water will find its own level if there be no intervening obstacles, and so will the prices of



things vendible. The French however used to except things "of the last necessity," even where they admitted the truth of the principle, as we did in the assize of bread, upon the ground, that while things are finding their own level, the people may starve. I will not stop to examine *this* or any other exception, but will simply observe, that if the first principle of political economy be so absolutely true, as its professors contend, it is the only general rule which suffers no exception.

Allowing the general principle, of things finding their own level, to be true, with the reservation which I have

rent things from finding their own level, are removed. When I was in Sicily some years ago, there prevailed a dreadful famine; it was winter, and the neighbouring sea was infested by the Algerine cruizers. I used at this time, to hear the misery of the country attributed, by the English resident in it, to the folly of the government in preventing a free internal commerce, and the unrestricted export of grain from one district to another. Yet how much more unequally would the

distress probably have operated under this unrestricted system of intercourse! A more fruitful district, tempted by the high prices given in its neighbourhood, might have poured all its plenty into the lap of a bordering province, and the exporting district have been left to starve. Because, before a reaction took place, all communication might have been cut off between the two, by unbridged torrents, often unfordable by carriages for months, while the passage by sea was intercepted by the Algerines.

What the corn-laws are to England, *in time of war*, the corn-laws of Sicily

were to each province* under the circumstances which I have detailed.

* The exportation of grain from one country to another was prohibited even in England till what may be considered as a late period of society.—See *Hume*.

MORE especially as it respects early periods, when measured by our scale of probabilities, would certainly seem to be a very extraordinary tissue of falsehoods. In occasionally trying these by some recognized standard, I would not, however, willingly fall into the error which Horace Walpole has committed in his Historic Doubts; for this would be to embark upon an unknown sea, without a pilot. I am not for rejecting authority, because a fact is *questionable*; I am only for balancing

it will bear such a mode of examination.

We are told that the Cisalpine Gauls, having besieged the capital of Rome, were about to receive a ransom for it, in gold, when they were forcibly obliged to abandon the siege by Camillus. Mark the very dramatic, but improbable manner, in which Livy, the picturesque author, on whose authority it rests, relates the occurrence. The Romans and Gauls are introduced

upon the stage, with a pair of balances, &c. The Gauls tilt the beam, the Romans remonstrate, and Brennus casts his sword into the scale, with the exclamation of *Væ victis!* In answer to this insolent speech, Camillus, who has entered during their proceedings, declares, the capital is to be ransomed with iron and not with gold.—Then, *alarm and exeunt!*—Both parties retire from the stage to fight, and the Gauls are beaten off. Contrast this melodrame of Livy with the narration of Polybius, an author much nearer the time, a practical man, and both a politician and a diplomatist. He says that the Cisalpine Gauls *received* the ransom for the capital, and were in-

whose authority might lead us to suspect the testimony of Livy; for Suetonius, speaking of Tiberius, tells us that one of his ancestors, whom he names, *was said to* have *brought back from Cisalpine Gaul, the gold paid for the ransom of the capital.*

Consider, moreover, in addition to this conflicting evidence, the woes which followed this supposed repulse of the Gauls. The neighbouring States, after the deliverance of the

capital, take this moment of her most signal triumph to rise in insurrection against Rome. Surely this circumstance (which is related by Livy) makes rather in confirmation of the story of Polybius.

So much for a received fact in Roman history!

It appears to me that the question of the locality of Troy has never been fairly considered. One party seems to find exact coincidences with the descriptions of Homer in the present appearances of the supposed plain of Troy; and the other not to make sufficient allowance for changes which take place in the course of rivers, and from the action of the sea upon coasts; one of which latter effects may be seen in actual operation near the very spot where the Grecian ships were supposed

to be drawn up, and which may entirely explain the difficulty as far as regards one of Homer's details.

The scrupulous examination however of such details is not, in my mind, the fair mode of considering the subject, with reference to a decision, whether the plain in question was Homer's plain of Troy. I should think it enough that the general appearances of the scene tallied with that of Homer; and if I found (as is the case) that the character of the shore, of the rivers, of the trees, and of the animals, was *that* attributed to these by the poet, I should be satisfied the place now visited as the plain

not necessary to his purpose; and, as he cannot compose a long work upon the spot, he can, moreover, but preserve an imperfect recollection of details. At any rate he will treat these in a great measure as best suits his end, giving a minute view of certain points, and contenting himself with a broad outline of others. Were Walter Scott (as an example) to make the New Forest the scene of a poem, should we expect such mechanical accuracy from him as we would exact from Homer?

I hardly know any thing more interesting than the next great sight, which presents itself after the plain of Troy; but this interests by its appearance more than by associations. I mean

CONSTANTINOPLE;

WHICH I approached about sun-rise, from the sea of Marmora.

The view of this city, which appeared intersected by groves of cypress, (for such is the effect of its great burial-grounds planted with these

direction in perfect silence, amid sea-fowl, who sat at rest upon the waters, altogether conveyed such an impression, as I had never received, and probably never shall again receive, from the view of any other place. If there ever was a legitimate excuse for a sonnet it is to be found in beholding this view. I will venture to give one, which was suggested by it; but will not venture to say that I have never committed the offence upon a lighter temptation.

TO CONSTANTINOPLE.

A glorious form thy shining city wore,
'Mid cypress thickets of perennial green,
With minaret and golden dome between,
While thy sea softly kiss'd its grassy shore:

Darting across whose blue expanse was seen
Of sculptured barques and galleys many a score;
Whence noise was none save that of plashing oar;
Nor word was spoke, to break the calm serene.

Unheard is whiskered boatman's hail or joke;
Who, mute as Sinbad's man of copper, rows,
And only intermits the sturdy stroke,

When fearless Gull too nigh his pinnace goes.
I, hardly conscious if I dreamed or woke,
Mark'd that strange piece of action and respose.

While such is the external appearance of Constantinople, I ought to remark that strangers, disappointed by

upon me was the splendour and variety of the costume of its inhabitants; the *bostangìs*, the *galeongìs*, the *janissaries*, the *spahis*, &c. &c. &c. all attired in different, and all in beautiful dresses. The Turk has no eye for *figure*, (which he is prevented by religious scruples from studying,) but he has an exquisite taste for what may be called picturesque design, as in arabesques, and as great a felicity in the arrangement of colours; in which latter point, he is aided by his climate,

the warm tints of which soften contrast, and justify the boldest combinations of red and blue, yellow and purple, &c. &c.

I have said that the Bosphorus is covered with boats. These are beautifully carved and gilt, and the small fountain-bason, which spouts water in a barber's shop in Constantinople might in its frieze afford a study to the most skilful of our artists.

Accident as well as climate seems to have aided the Turk in his composition of dresses and ceremonies, which, I believe, exhibit a union of Greek and Tartar magnificence. It was in-

their present obstinate attachment to their own usages, and their dislike to any thing European, did not always form a part of Turkish character, nor indeed is it natural that it should have done so; for the character of a roving horde (such as the Turks then were) is widely different from that of a sedentary people, such as they must now be considered. Moreover, as Mr. Rose observes in his *Letters from the North of Italy*, a closer contact with the Christians produced greater familiarity. "In earlier times," says that writer, "intermarriages were not uncommon between Turks and Christians, and we have the example of the daughter of a Greek emperor betrothed to a sultan. A remarkable feature in this treaty is a stipulation for her having the means of exercising the rites of her own religion in the seraglio. The fact, if I recollect rightly, is noticed by Gibbon."

Tartars in China; and I have little doubt, for instance, that the superb ceremony of receiving foreign ambassadors at Constantinople, is a relic of imperial etiquette. On this occasion the Grand Signior is seated in the western fashion, with his legs dependent from his throne; and indeed the whole ceremony nearly coincides with that described by Anna Commenas.

Another usage has evidently been derived from Greek times. The Greek emperor was under the necessity of attending church in state, on Sundays, as a proof that he was alive and in health, and the Grand Signior not only attends the mosque in form,

I shall here again venture upon a sonnet. There is at least one merit in this species of composition. The reader knows the extent of what he is to endure, and the author, though circumscribed as to form and numbers, finds the same pleasure in his performance that a skaiter does in achieving a figure of eight.

ON SEEING THE SULTAN GOING TO THE MOSQUE.

One Friday morn, the Moslem's sabbath, I,
Where Bosphorus with wider stream expands,
Stood, like an eastern slave, with folded hands,
While to his mosque the Turkish lord swept by;

(So he the ancient ruler of these lands
Erst visited his church,) half hid from eye,
By crested helms and lances lifted high;
Not girt with scymetared and turbaned bands.

Like him, in weal or woe, must he maintain
This ancient use, lest, moved by priest or peers,
The moody rabble should disturb his reign.

And much it pleased me, looking on those spears,
To think how little is the tyrant's gain,
Who, in usurping power, heirs all its fears.

Though there is so much to delight the eye at Constantinople, there is much less room for the study of man-

though they will entertain a traveller, who stands in need of food or shelter, upon the road, they will not do so at Constantinople, knowing that he has the resource of an hotel or of his own ambassador's palace at Pera.

Whoever has travelled at all in eastern countries must be struck by the great resemblance which there is between the manners he witnesses and those pourtrayed in the

ARABIAN NIGHTS.

It has sometimes struck me that these stories, the great value of which assuredly consists in their faithful pictures of Asiatic life, may also contain some other curious points of interest. All very early tales may be considered as parables, or as figurative of some mystery or supposed truth, moral or religious. Now the Arabian Tales are by the best authorities considered as being principally of Persian origin; we know that they were disapproved by the earlier and stricter Mussulmans

As a confirmation of this idea, and as a reason for supposing that some of these stories may contain such allegories as I have hinted, it is curious to observe in how many of these is to be found something symbolical of the fall of man: to wit, the story of some superior taking an inferior into protection, upon condition of his abstaining from some offered temptation, and of his afterwards withdrawing that protection, on a violation of the condition upon

which it was to be continued. The great (and the most perfect) allegory which we have of this, is in the old Milesian tale of Cupid and Psyche; but less perfect shadows of it are to be found in *the Persian Talès* and *Arabian Nights' Entertainments.* Thus we have it in the story of *Cheristhany*, in several stories of *Scott's Arabian Tales*, and in *the Three Calenders* in *the Arabian Nights.*

This last singular story would seem to have been taken from an allegory of the nature which I have described, embodied in some old Mithratic mystery. At any rate the resemblance in the adventures of the three princes

gression, and what is remarkable (and leads me to suspect some allusion to a mysterious initiation) this penance is connected with the descent of each into a cave; though, as the story has reached us, this connection would appear to be accidental.

It is a pity that these Arabian tales will not suffer an exact version; for the European translators are sure to injure the pictures of manners which they present, by touches of their own.

Thus in the story of Bedreddin Hassan and the cream tarts, in the *Arabian Nights*, and in that of a prince, in one of the *New Arabian Tales*, who is represented officiating as a cook, the French editor tries to soften such incidents by some exculpatory circumstance; whereas none was required—the culinary art ranking high as an accomplishment among the Eastern nations, and the title of cook being still one of high military rank among the Janissaries.

The origin of this is to be found in the precedence which is naturally given in an imperfect state of refinement to the useful, before what are at a later

title to nobility by his skill in hunting, and in dressing the game which his greyhounds had run down.

Considered under such points of view, every national fable is a curious study which usually depicts truly the manners of a people; and often throws light upon the history of nations. This, however, sometimes proves an *ignis fatuus* to the antiquary who pur-

sues it, and who, in so doing, ought not only to watch his guide narrowly, but to observe the nature of the country over which it is conducting him. Thus

HAVE been supposed to prove connections between remote nations; I think, sometimes without reason: for, as I was saying above, early fable is usually figurative, and the agreement therefore between national tales often proves only a community of origin between the stories, and not between the nations. Sir William Jones, after remarking that the shores of almost every lake in India are made the scene of a combat between a land and a sea-monster,

which he says, very truly, is also a favourite local fiction with the Celtic tribes, is induced from thence to suppose them one and the same people. Now, is not this Celtic and Asiatic fiction rather to be considered as a geological allegory which might naturally enough suggest itself to two separate races of people? It appears to me to be typical of what is constantly taking place, a sort of struggle between the land and water, in which sometimes the water gains upon the land, and sometimes the land upon the water.

This mode of explaining the community of fictions will extend widely,

MEDICINE

SEEMS hardly to have made any essential progress since the time of Hippocrates. It is necessarily an uncertain science; but that which appears most to have impeded its progress, and must ever impede it, is its dependance upon our hopes and fears. A new medicine is discovered, which is found to be a salutary agent in many cases. Extravagant hopes are entertained by all, who are afflicted with the ills, for which it is supposed to be a specific, and many, or perhaps most, who resort to

causes too long to enumerate. A violent reaction in public opinion immediately takes place, and the medicine is in the end despised, simply because it was overrated at first. Some twenty years afterwards it is revived, and, though perhaps not so hastily praised or condemned, experiences the same sort of fate, as on its first experiment; and thus it is that physic consists of a repetition of the same unsuccessful experiments; because these depend, in

the aggregate, as much upon the good sense of the patient as upon that of the practitioner.

This is the more to be regretted as no improvement has ever been introduced into physic but through experience. No theory has ever, I believe, led to successful practice, and many important discoveries have even been attended with immediate evil, while they have produced none of the benefits which might have been expected from their establishment. Thus the discovery of the circulation of the blood has been followed by no good practical result that I am aware of; and at first led to the suspension of

the very wholesome practice of local bleeding. The same consequences have issued from the establishment of other great physical truths.

DIET

is certainly a safer agent than medicine; yet it is one which, like medicine, requires sense and discrimination in its application. Man is, we know, designed to live on animal and vegetable food; but because a purely animal, or purely vegetable, diet has been, in certain cases, successful, we find half the world going mad upon the one system, and half upon the other. It is discovered that boxers attain the highest degree of wind and muscular strength by feeding principally upon meat that is

ing a slice of deal; or whether its consequential effects (even if it were digestible) might not well outweigh the short health and vigour which the boxer purchases by his stimulating diet.*

* The system of training, with respect to pugilists, &c. cannot be continued long without occasioning a reaction, and if the training has been so continued, the patient, who has not effected his purpose, must discontinue his dietetic discipline and live in the usual manner for some time, before he can recommence it with effect.

The most curious proof indeed, which exists of the perverseness of mankind, with respect to diet, is that they are never enlightened by experience. They persist, for instance, in giving to sick persons and young children, as the most innocent food, that which the experiments of Spallanzani*

Nature will not be overstrained; nor indeed will she be cheated out of her own: for all these things are injurious to the general health and are found to shorten life. The same effects follow from fatting fowls which are not eaten at the proper period, &c. &c.

* Experiments made upon his system prove the skin of dried fruits, and more especially of raisins and currants, to be utterly indigestible. The Italians indeed ascribe this quality to the skin of the undried grape, and have a proverb, which says, "Give the skin of a peach to your friend, and the skin of a grape to your enemy."

they appear to shut their eyes and ears, where any thing really useful is to be learned; for here the experience of the boxers, which they quote in cases not in point, might serve them as a guide. Now these disciplinants (as I am given to understand) consider the eating a slice of plum-pudding as equivalent to the loss of a week's training! If a boxer cannot digest plum-pudding, who can entertain such a hope!- There is indeed no one more prejudiced and perverse about

diet than an Englishman. He sets out with the position that all variety of food is unwholesome, though I know no reason why it should be so, (except that it may lead us into excess,) for the most opposite materials are often mutual correctives, and naturally harmonize. He next determines that raw meat is more nutritious than what is more cooked, without considering (as I said before) that it cannot be nutritious to such stomachs as are incapable of digesting it; and, while he eats pork, peas-pudding, mustard, and greens deluged with butter, in a mess, he piques himself on dining upon *one dish and living on wholesome food.*

probably be considered as a useful accessary to medicine and regimen, yet it is singular to observe how little it is resorted to in this country, and therefore how little it is understood. We indeed differ from the whole of Europe in our mode of applying it, which is in itself a suspicious circumstance, considering how little we can be guided by our proper experience. A convalescent friend of mine, who was suffering under the consequences of a

diarrhœa, was advised by a French physician to try this remedy, and, to his annoyance, found his weakness and irritability infinitely increased. These symptoms surprised his physician, who, however, asked him if he took it in the English way, and on his saying "Yes," bade him the next time take it for an hour, dine afterwards, and instead of wrapping himself up, come home to dinner, as he was usually drest. My friend did so, ate well, slept well, and ever afterwards derived the same advantages from following this advice.

No people but ourselves, I believe, take the warm or tepid bath for less than half an hour. The Frenchman's

[redacted]

wholesome sedative.

LANGUAGES.

THERE is no acquiring a language well through the medium of any language but our own. One reason that Greek is so ill learned is that it is taught by means of Latin, and the same remark applies to Italian, which is learned through the medium of French, yet more strikingly. For there is still more analogy between the two, (which is the source of blunders,) and a resemblance which necessarily misleads. This deceitful resemblance prevails throughout the grammar, in a

parts in another language, is hardly to be expected; and the difference of meaning attached to *aimable* in French and *amiable* in English, is a striking illustration of the fact. But the shades of difference which have fallen even upon French and Italian vulgar words, since their separation from their common mother, are yet more embarrassing. This is best illustrated perhaps by a mistake which I once made at Milan. I was helped to some bouilli and vege-

tables at a Milanese table, and requested the addition of some more *legumi.* I was informed that there were none; I protested that I had already eaten some, and a ridiculous scene followed. The fact is, that I considered the meaning of *legumi* to be co-extensive with that of the French word *légumes*, and naturally enough asked for some under that denomination. *Legumi*, however, in Italian, is confined to pulse or berries, and hence Parini calls coffee *il legume nero.*

The pronunciation of the language, through the medium of which another is acquired, mingles as mischievously with that other as its syntax and phra-

seology, and this is, I believe, one reason why English women, who cultivate Italian so much, pronounce it so ill. I have heard this attributed abroad to that sort of indistinct pronunciation so common among English women that it can hardly be considered as affected; but I think it is to be attributed principally to the previous acquisition of those French mute vowels, and half sounds, as in the *u* and *eu*, that are most foreign to the Italian, in which there are no diphthongs or mute consonants, but in which every vowel and every consonant is distinctly enunciated.*

* The English, among other defects, very rarely acquire the pronunciation of reduplicated

Mr. Mitford, in his Harmony of Languages, seems to consider this disagreeable, and apparently unnatural sound of the French *u*, as much more confined than it really is. I am but an indifferent linguist, but I know it prevails almost all over France; over that part of Italy (where it is styled the *u Lombardo)* which was inhabited by Gallic tribes; from the country of the Allobrogi up to that of the Veneti; that is to say, from the kingdom of

consonants, and as a proof, I never saw *improvvisatore* properly spelt (excepting in one English work) either in book or newspaper. It is always found written in them with one *v*; yet the two *v*'s are beat (as the Italians phrase it) distinctly to the ear: while, on the other hand, *casino* is frequently written and pronounced *cassino*.

shire, and Norfolk and Suffolk.

I have remarked that it is to be found in the Piedmontese and Milanese provinces, where the Italian *o* is sounded like the French *ou*, or English *oo*, and the Italian *u* precisely like the French *u*. These provinces contain some other curious proofs of the durability of national pronunciation; for all the old Latin inscriptions discovered in them, abound with Gallic peculiarities, as the substitution of the *w* for the Roman *v*, &c.

This proof of the indelibility of national sounds should make us less rash in supposing that languages have entirely changed their pronunciation, and that we know better how to speak than the descendants of those to whom they were familiar. Yet it is thus that we have decided upon the Romaïc or Modern Greek; a language that has deviated less than could have been imagined from the ancient; and here, in addition to the general reason which I have adduced, we have other and more precise ones for believing those sounds to be traditional, which we reject as impossible to have been used among the former Greeks. Thus the proper pronunciation of one of those, at which

as Γραιοι into Graii, &c. &c.; and indeed a passage in Thucydides, which has very unnecessarily puzzled the commentators, ought to set this question at rest. He says that an oracle had foretold,

Ἥξει Δωριακος πολεμος και λοιμος ἀμ' ἀυτω.

On this it is observed that opinions were then divided as to whether λοιμος meant pestilence or famine. Now surely the modern mode of sounding the οι, which

is the same in λοιμος pestilence, and λιμος famine, at once explains the difficulty, and establishes the genuineness of the present pronunciation.

"But," say the learned, "the modern Greeks cannot be right in pronouncing by accent, instead of by quantity." Now I should like to know how any language can be *spoken* according to laws of quantity—how any syllable can be short or long, except with reference to other syllables, combined in some sort of metrical arrangement. It is with metre as with musical *melody*, a long syllable is long compared with a short one, as a crotchet is long contrasted with a quaver; but neither

Greek must have been pronounced by quantity, because accentuation was of late introduction; they ought to say, because the *signs* of accentuation were of late introduction. As well might a New Zealander, a thousand years hence, say that English must have been pronounced by quantity, as no accents were to be found in English books.

The Romans used no *marks* of accentuation: but we know that they

used *accents*, and we find that *vulgar* poets among them were misled by these into such false quantities as are committed by a boy unpractised in Latin versification at Eton or Westminster. Thus in an old inscription dug up in Italy, (and from other signs evidently the work of an uneducated person,) *manibus* is made a dactyl, a clear proof, I think, that the poet had heard the word so pronounced in prose or conversation.

An additional proof, if a proof was wanting, that the mode of accentuation was derived from the ancient Greeks, is, that though the moderns are ignorant of the rules upon which it is based,

as ἐιπὲμȣ, (like *dimmi* in Italian,) has the accent upon πὲ. This last observation will, perhaps, be urged as a proof that accent is founded upon quantity, and consequently that it is an after-growth. I consider, however, the opinions of grammarians (who are in general very unphilosophical reasoners) as rashly formed, and built on a mere accidental coincidence; for surely the instances cannot be considered as sufficient to justify their in-

duction where the exceptions are as numerous as the proofs by which they would warrant their rule.

A few more remarks as to quantity: I have observed that it is impossible that it can exist but by contrast, that is, in something like a metrical arrangement of words; but *we* not only think we find it where it does not exist, but think that we hear it when it is not heard. Thus the Italian and the Englishman (for the Frenchman, who accents every final syllable, is out of the question) think that they read Virgil, as Virgil should be read, when they say

Àrma virùmque càno—

When a sword was presented to Kosciusco, a poet wrote some bad Latin verses as an inscription for it, one of which, a pentameter, concluded with the words,

gladius Angligenûm.

On this a critic exclaimed, "How could you make such a false quantity? Don't you know that the *gla* in gladius is short—have you no ear?" "You might ask me with more reason, if I

had no *eye*," said the poet; "for are you not now pronouncing *gla* as long as accent can make it?"

It is hence I should say that of all the absurd innovations in national prosody which I ever witnessed, that of introducing the Latin hexameter into English appears to me to be the most extravagant; for, in the first place, according to our accentual pronunciation, much is artificial quantity, (as has been shown,) which only long discipline has brought us to admit as real; and in the next place, long discipline can only form us to an exact perception of *rhythm*, where this difficulty does not exist, that is, where accent or quantity

be tutored in the doctrine of Hexameters and Pentameters; for if you could make him understand that two lines which occur in his church service were verses, as,

"God is gone up with a shout; the Lord with the sound of a trumpet;"

or the more familiar one of,

"Husbands love your wives, and be not bitter against them;"

it would be infinitely more difficult to make him understand which of these

two is a good and which is a bad exemplification of such a metre.

To return from prosody to my old subject.

The most striking particular in which the Romaïc, on which I have lately said so much, differs from the ancient Greek, is the greater simplicity of its grammar; and this appears to me to be the natural tendency of languages; they are simplified, as machinery is, in practice. The Gaëlic is remarkable for its complications, the English for its simplicity.

There is, however, sometimes, a

period of reaction, when a sort of morbid refinement takes place; and our purists are now presenting an example of that perverseness. Why would these pedants attempt to assimilate a grammar and an idiom of a different character to those of two classical languages, with which they have little in common, an attempt in which they are sure to efface what is most picturesque in our own, without acquiring the supposed consistency and grace of the others? But these men and women are wofully superficial if they have not discovered that Greek and Latin, as well as English, have their grammatical anomalies.

GHOSTS.

I ONCE believed in ghosts, and am still afraid of them.* I was cured of

* Count Anthony Hamilton has justified by his example this apparent inconsistency, in certain verses addressed to himself by himself, which begin,

O vous, qui craignez tant les esprits,
Et qui les craignez sans y croire, &c.,

in which he shows a better understanding of his subject than Dr. Johnson, who says, speaking of ghosts, "that many, who deny their existence with their lips, confess it by their fears;" forgetting that fear might be the offspring of feeling, and belief that of reason.

ever, which made a deep impression upon me, and which stood their ground longest, against the obvious reasons for rejecting ghosts *en masse*, were, first, those, which were witnessed by more than one person, and, secondly, stories in which there appeared to be a coincidence between the vision and an event signified. I got over the first difficulty, without explaining it wholly to my satisfaction, by the falsehood

prepense of witnesses, though perhaps this *would* offer a sufficient explanation. More than one occasion demonstrated to me how entirely the senses and understanding may be imposed upon by example, when in a state of excitement, and that the impressions made upon one mind in such a state, are instantaneously received and repeated by another equally agitated. Thus, put two men, who are drunk or frightened, into a haunted room, and one will assuredly see what is seen by his companion. In this respect we resemble musical instruments; tune two of these to the same pitch, lay them upon a table, strike a note on one, and it will vibrate in the other. This illustration,

[redacted]
Think then this world which Heaven enrolls,
Is but a table round, and souls
More apprehensive be.

This general disposition of mankind explains why the law objects to *leading questions* being put to witnesses, who, even without a motive for falsehood, will correspond in their answers to the thing suggested to them; and a story is told of a barrister, who, wishing to persuade a friend of the effect of such interrogatories, called up his groom

and asked him if he did not recollect seeing I forget what, in crossing Wimbledon common two nights before. "Yes, Sir, to be sure I do," said the man;—"Yet we saw nothing," said the lawyer, when the man had left the room. Ben Jonson has painted this propensity in human nature very happily in his Alchymist, where a set of witnesses are introduced peremptorily asserting things and denying them, as they receive their impression from the interrogator.

As to the second class of ghost-stories; *i. e.* those which derive authority from the event being verified, which was apparently indicated by the appa-

play and fortunate numbers, and prizes indicated by them in the monthly foreign lotteries, &c., as between the presignification of an event by some vision and its simultaneous or future verification. I moreover found upon a close observation of these stories, what might very well have been anticipated: namely, that though an exact register is kept of such coincidences, no note is ever taken of their failures. Yet many have accidentally come to my know-

ledge; and I will cite one of them: upon the old principle, that

> "Where examples are well chosen,
> One is as valid as a dozen."

A Mr. C——, a Catholic gentleman who had served long in the regiment of Dillon, in the French army, a man much distinguished for his personal courage, and of a singularly strong judgment, went, during one of his visits to England, of which he was a native, to see a friend of his own religious persuasion. In this gentleman's family was a priest for whom he entertained an old friendship, and whom he found most dangerously ill. He had an interview with him, and then returned to

the house of a relation, in which he was staying. On going up-stairs to his bed-room in this, he saw the likeness of the priest, pale and cadaverous as he had left him, sitting in an elbow-chair, by his bed-side. He approached the figure, which neither stirred nor spoke, and, being determined, like Almanzor, or some other of Dryden's tragic heroes,

> "to try what was the *substance* of a ghost,"

he planted himself in its lap. To his surprize, he went though the lap of the apparition; and found himself seated in the chair; while the figure, shifting its position, stood before him; and on Mr. C—— finishing his toilet (which

he did with the utmost composure) preceded him in his advance towards the bed and apparently past into it, between the curtains. Mr. C— put out his candle, followed him and slept undisturbed by so singular a bedfellow. In the morning the first thing he did was to order his horse and ride to the house where he had visited his sick friend, who had had a favourable crisis in the meantime, and was pronounced convalescent. Had this man died, who doubts but that the coincidence between his appearance and death would have established the authenticity of the apparition?

Mr. C—, the catholic, seems to have

touch of him* who witnessed the appearance.

* In No LXXI. of the Observer, Mr. Cumberland gives an account of a ghost, seen by a country curate, who relates; "*I put out my arm to feel it, and my hand seemingly went through the body of it and felt no manner of substance till it came to the wall; then I drew back my hand, and still it was in the same place.*"

Mr. Cumberland, commenting upon this narrative, says, "I shall make no remark upon this genuine account, except as to the passage which I have put in italics: if Mr. Wilkins was thoroughly possest of himself at that moment, as he deposes, and is strictly correct in his fact, the narrative is established! !"

In making this observation, I might, however, lead to wrong inferences: for the catholic is perhaps, generally speaking, less credulous than the protestant upon such points, for any but philosophical reasons.

A female traveller in a catholic country is surprized to find that its inhabitants, who credit extravagant legends, reject all stories of ghosts. If she had travelled somewhat more, she would have ceased to wonder at so general a fact: and, if she had *thought* somewhat more, she would have found a simple explanation of it. It is precisely because they believe in so many wonderful legends, that the inhabitants

There are certainly some minds, which, as some bodies have an indiscriminate craving for food, have in like manner a morbid appetite for the marvellous, and will swallow *every species* of superstition. This is not however a general appetite, and the exclusive preference which minds usually show *for the superstitions to which they have been habituated,* is demonstrated oddly enough in the statements of the *clairvoyants,* or by whatever other name they may be denominated in the

annals of animal magnetism. For it is to be observed, that all the supposed revelations which are made to these people, are communicated through the medium of some recognized minister. If a German or an Englishman is enlightened in a vision, it is by a spirit; if a catholic, it is by a saint; and a North American Indian would probably be informed by a beaver or elk, or by whatever animal form he supposed his *manitoo*, or guardian genius, to have selected for his purposes on earth.

A GREAT wonderment has been excited on the continent by the revival of this pretended science; many, (and of those, many are physicians,) who *were* convinced of its being a deception, and were among those who first laughed it out of the field, have since recanted, and some sovereigns have been so convinced of its mischievous power, as to have prohibited the exercise of it in their dominions.

It would be perhaps going too far,

to reject all the facts as impostures which have made such an impression on men, who were, by their education and pursuits, the best qualified to investigate them. It is an easy matter to reject an extraordinary story altogether; but, as most lies have some truth in them, it seems a more philosophical proceeding to suspend our judgment as to the powers of this supposed agent; though there can be no doubt that these have been most extravagantly exaggerated.

At the same time that I would not pronounce rashly as to this, or indeed as to any other discovery, which, like every thing else, is entitled to a fair

under those of Prince Hohenloe, (which I will in courtesy believe,) as tests of his supernatural power. Surely, no one who has ever witnessed the cure of ague by charms, of gout and paralysis by fright, &c. &c., can be at a loss for an explanation of the mystery; and why should not other diseases be acted upon in a similar manner? Faith can remove mountains. The influence of the mind upon the body is witnessed, in a thousand circumstances, and this is, no doubt, a cause of the occasional

success of quacks, who possess themselves of the imagination of the patient.

If, however, in order to have an explanation of the mystery, it is not necessary to reject the evidence on which such cures appear to be established, it is not always very rational to admit it; for the belief of the patient can hardly be considered as greater than the credulity of the bystanders, which is, I suppose, to be explained on the principle of sympathy, by which I have attempted to account for the agreement of witnesses in supernatural visions. Nay, I might go farther, and say, that the belief of the assistants sometimes exceeds that of the patient: and I was

of justice.

Two years ago a man appeared in the Isle of Wight, who proclaimed himself to be the seventh son of a seventh son, and, in virtue of this, pretended to be invested with supernatural power for the cure of diseases. These he healed by prayer. His success in this was said to be wonderful, and he was literally followed by all the sick *no*bility and *mo*bility of the south of

Hampshire. This folly was so epidemic, that a sick friend of mine was persecuted in almost every company which he entered upon the subject; entreated to avail himself of so safe a mode of cure, and referred to two people in his own neighbourhood, both of whom were, in some sort, connected with his family, for a proof of this seventh son's son's preternatural powers. These two persons were said to have been cured by him, the one of a long continued deafness and the other of as inveterate a lameness. My friend, I hope, rather in the spirit of curiosity as to the value of testimony than from any belief in the man's success, sought out these two persons; one of whom

was a woman in a very respectable station of life, and the other a poor but honest faggot-maker. The first (the deaf woman) said that "she had derived infinite benefit from the miracle-monger;" but could only hear when the interrogator roared his questions to her through a speaking-trumpet; the second, (the lame man, who was universally proclaimed cured,) confessed frankly, that he had reason to curse the hour when he fell in with the impostor. "He was drinking at an alehouse when the man addrest him, broke his crutch-stick, and bade him walk."—So I did, (said he,) and went home; but when I got out of bed (pursued the deponent) found I was worse than ever,

and was sorry I had let the man break my crutch." Such results of his operations as these (and there were many) did not lessen the faith which was placed in the doctor: he was beset by lord and peasant as before, and whole packet-boats from the main land were crowded with his patients. A whimsical circumstance at last ruined his reputation, and the besotted multitude awoke as from a dream. He had always (as will be readily believed) taken indirect presents, but he ventured at last to receive fees. He was then deserted by his patients, and actually died of hunger in the place where he had so long and successfully exercised his calling.

Thus then we may pronounce, *trying back* in the examination of such questions as these, first, that we cannot in these cases safely depend upon any human evidence; and, secondly, that if the evidence is true and such cures substantiated, it does not at all follow that they are produced by the means supposed. In all cases like the last, it would of course argue a degree of madness even to entertain the subject; but in all cases of medicine it would appear, as I have said, most rational to suspend our belief, and trust to time and experience for a solution of the difficulty.

THE MOON.

We think we are abandoning our follies, as well as our vices, when we are only changing them. The last story, and a thousand other such, attest this truth, and may sufficiently prove our inveterate credulity. It is thus that we have substituted phrenology, or whatever other preposterous term its cultivators claim for it, for other not more ridiculous theories; it is thus that we have rejected witchcraft to believe in animal magnetism; and shall, I suppose, if we are to reason from the past, revolve

stript her of many of her attributes, remains yet possessed of many of those singular rights which were vested in her by our ancestors; and, perhaps, may be cited as the most extraordinary proof of our prescriptive credulity in opposition to all *reasoning* and *fact*.

For the *fact*; the Moon, say the *lunatics*, influences the weather; but a long series of observations, though they exhibit some curious coincidences be-

tween the changes of this luminary and those of the weather, utterly disprove the *fact*. Now for their *reasoning*;—"The moon influences the sea, and why should it not influence the air?"—Unluckily observation proves that it does not. Yet, in theory, I certainly do not see why it should not influence the air *in the same manner* in which it acts upon the sea; that is, why it should not create tides in our atmosphere as well as in our waters. But I cannot understand according to what rules of analogy, the moon is expected, at full and change, to create the *uncertain and opposite* effect of storms or calms in the sky, because she at such periods produces the *certain* effect of spring-

upon to believe that she acts upon an opposite system *there*, and that the same cause changes fair to foul and foul to fair. For does not the reasoning of the lunatics amount to this? Can any body, who is content to examine his grounds for belief or disbelief, looking at the question in this view, entertain so ridiculous a superstition?*

But, (say the believers,) "seamen, as

* I use superstition in the wide sense of the word, and consistently with its intrinsic meaning.

well as landsmen, entertain these opinions." Undoubtedly many seamen do; because there are silly seamen as well as silly landsmen, and because seamen are yet more bigoted than landsmen to the prejudices in which they have been educated, and, consequently, are more superstitious. If, however, we are to yield up our opinions, in defiance of common sense, to such authority, we shall never set bounds to our belief. For on questioning once some Torbay fishermen about the weather, (of which they are usually better judges than those who sail the high seas,) I was informed by them, "that we should have no better while the 'Size-week lasted."

captain of much reputation, during a tedious voyage, of a long continuance of contrary winds which we had experienced; when he exclaimed, "Well! the moon changes to-morrow, and I hope we shall have a change of weather!"—"And do you believe in such changes?"—"Why it is a —— comfortable belief, (he answered,) and I'll be —— if I give it up;" and such would usually be found to be the foundation of the faith so generally entertained.

With respect to the moon, however, we are not more credulous than our neighbours; and on this point, and on two or three superstitions arising out of our common religion,* the nations of Europe seem alone to be agreed. Nothing else is conventional. On almost all other points the same passions seem to take a different form and co-

* In the ill luck attached to Friday, the day of the Crucifixion; the better fortune ascribed to Sunday, the day of the resurrection, as shown in our proverb of

"A Sunday's sail
Will never fail"—

in the ominous number of thirteen at table, and supposed fate of him who rises first, derived from the consequences of the Paschal supper and the end of Judas Iscariot, &c. &c.—superstitions which are common to all the nations of Europe.

might indeed be written

will call

AND a curious illustration it would be of the mistakes of Travellers. For no one of these is prepared to try the character or manners of a foreign people by any but a home-standard of weights and measures.

Thus the English traveller is scandalized at seeing the fishermen of Naples dreaming away the middle of a summer's day in the shade; and, while he raves about their sloth, is ignorant

In the same manner the Englishman who has been plundered and made a hostage by banditti in Italy, comes back, execrating the people as a nation of robbers, and finds no palliation for their violence, in the absence of the thousand other violations of property to which he is exposed in our roads and in our metropolis.*

* It may be added that the English traveller is nine times out of ten exposed to danger by his own folly; for (wherever he is) he reasons and acts as if he were in England. When Lord V—— and his party, for instance, were attacked,

But if the traveller made a longer residence in Italy he would find that there is no country in which thievery is so uncommon, and he might wonder

about twelve years ago, they were the authors of their own catastrophe. The landlord of an inn either at Itri or Fondi persuaded them to stop and pass the night at his house, and, I have no doubt, gave intelligence to the banditti to way-lay them. Had they travelled right onward, and without putting him in their confidence, they would probably have escaped. There are so few travellers on the Italian roads, that robbers do not find it worth while to keep the field at all hours, as in England, and accordingly robberies are preconcerted, and the banditti, like Bays's army, have usually "the inn-keepers for their friends." A traveller who makes no display of toilette-plate and jewels, and who does not put any body in his confidence, will generally escape. In suspicious places, he should rise at an *unexpected hour*, call his own servant, and dispatch him for his post-horses.

draws through them for small sums, as he would upon his bankers at home, and therefore has seldom large deposits of money in his own hands, the Italian has his quarter's receipts in his bureau.* Yet how seldom do we hear of an Italian house being robbed, how seldom do we hear of a robbery by an Italian servant!

* Having drawn for a large sum when the exchange was favourable, I wanted the Italian on whom I drew to keep it for me, but he peremptorily refused, as I imagine *every* foreign banker would.

I might say, that having resided some time in that country, I could bear witness as truly to the rarity of theft in all its other departments. I will select one instance only of the singular honesty of the people in confirmation of this assertion. Mr. C——, a Swiss author, whose very original work on Italy is well known to the world, told me that he was once forced to take up his lodging at a mountain wine-house, where he could find no better harbourage than a stable, in which he slept among muleteers and the ordinary kitchen militia of an Italian inn. He was called very early in the morning by his own muleteer, and on rising, missed from his waistcoat pocket a

rouleau, containing many Napoleons. In the first agitation caused by this discovery, he indiscreetly proclaimed his loss, when a lanthorn was produced, a search in the straw was commenced, and all the sovereigns but two, which I have no doubt were lost, were recovered and presented to him.

Travellers are not contented with exaggerating the crime of robbery in Italy, but assign unreal motives for it, which would lead us into making a very unfair estimate of the national character. The moral cause, seconded by political circumstances, seems to be the imaginative and excitable temperament of the people. The girls of Itri

and Fondi, the two great nurseries of banditti, will not marry a man who *has not been to the mountains,* attaching much the same notion to this phrase, that French girls do to the *having served;* and some of the ancient Italian governments prohibited the picturesque mask of a bandit, as speaking too strongly to the passions of the revellers in a carnival.

TRAVELLERS,

HOWEVER, see every thing, according to their own preconceptions; and, pandaring to the prejudices of others as well as to their own, are usually most popular in proportion as they depart most from truth. That they should see manners through a false medium, is not wonderful; but their mistakes do not stop here; they see *things* that are not, and hear *things* that are not. Thus a late popular traveller, a professor of science in one of our universities, and (as one should have thought)

formed by his habits of study to an exact contemplation of nature, saw the footsteps of a tiger in the snow of Mount Ida, in Asia Minor, where tigers *do not* exist, and found animalculæ in the Dead Sea, whose waters are saturated with salt, a menstruum in which animals *cannot* exist.

We complain justly of the falsehood and scurrility of a French resident in England, and the French complain perhaps as justly of a work of the late Mr. Scott upon Paris; because if his exaggerations are not so monstrous, they are more mischievous, as apparently more probable; and are certainly more inexcusable, as the work of an

or by a more intimate acquaintance with its inhabitants, have acquired a better insight into their usages and habits. This fault springs from a cause totally opposite to the other. For as the first error arises out of a false contrast of things foreign and domestic, the second arises from a want of means or power of making any comparison at all. A late ingenious traveller in Portugal is much scandalized that a stranger should be subject to be stopped and harassed by

the police in that country, for having meddled with the body of a murdered man. Here it should first be remarked, that such a step might necessarily be taken in every civilized country; and secondly that it appears much more reasonable, a traveller should be stopped and made to account for having come into contact with a murdered man, while the author of the crime was undiscovered, than that a traveller (as is frequently the case in England) should be stopped and harassed by the police for having been all but murdered himself.*

* This vexatious proceeding of the English law, which is unknown, I believe, in any other country, is well commented upon by that universal and accurate observer, the Author of the

ugh the narrations of others, is certainly a strong recommendation of travel; but we should remember that, if we travel as the authors of books of travels usually do, we are as likely to deceive ourselves as to be deceived

Scottish Novels. "Jenny did not understand him; and he explained, that the English law, in addition to the inconvenience sustained by persons who have been robbed or injured, has the goodness to intrust to them the care and expense of appearing as prosecutors."—See Jenny Deans's interview with Mr. Stanton in *The Heart of Mid Lothian.*

by others. It is only by a leisurely view of these, and by much intercourse with the natives, that we can hope to get at truth; for, at the outset of our observations in every new country, we learn but to unlearn. I remember once landing on a Grecian island and entering a house, where we saw something resembling a bow, when a gentleman who was with me, and who spoke a little Italian, asked what it was, and received for answer that it was *un arco*. "Ah, (said he to me) is not it curious that we should find bows among these people? The ancient inhabitants of these islands were, you know, famous for archery." The bow was for working cotton!

tremendous number of sights in a given time; and I never saw an unfortunate wretch setting out on such an expedition, accompanied by a *valet de place*, and with a guide-book under his arm; but I have felt for him something like what I feel for a man going to execution. What makes a second residence in a country delightful, is the having leisure to explore things by yourself, and to repeat your visit (which is the greatest charm) to whatever pleases you. It was, I suppose, on

these grounds that I once derived more pleasure from seeing two places, little visited, in the north of Italy, than I have often done from the view of wonders more worthy of my admiration. The first to which I allude is the castle of *Obizzo*,* not far from the residence of Petrarch at Arquà, a place which, both within and without, reminds one of many descriptions in Ariosto. When I saw it, the flowery park was full of various animals, feeding or reposing, hares, rabbits, and deer, and forcibly brought to my recollection the scene which Rogero witnesses on alighting

* The Italian translation of Obyson, a Burgundian family.

cano, [illegible]
Saltano i daini, e i capri spelli e destri,
Che sono in copia, in quei luoghi campestri.
Or. Furioso, Canto vi. Stanza 22.

Amid the roses red, and lilies fair,
Which the mild breezes freshen as they fly,
Secure the coney comes, and timid hare,
And stag with haughty forehead, broad and high;
Unfearful of the hunter's bolt or snare,
Whether they feed or ruminating lie:
While frequent in this wild, from tuft or steep,
Dun deer and nimble goat disporting leap.
Rose's Translation.

Within, the resemblance tallied with what we also find frequently described in the *Furioso*, as storied walls, painted in fresco, (on which are some works of Paolo Veronese,) representing various historical events, as weddings, assassinations, &c.; and among these, what is most striking to an English eye, an investiture of the garter.*

Another place that I recollect seeing with equal satisfaction was the isle of *Torcello*, or *Torzelo*, as the Venetians call it, situated at a short distance from Venice. This, which is yet less visited than Obizzo, was the summer resi-

* These are now copying at the expense of an English traveller.

sign than those to be seen in that species of *incastro*, (or what we, I believe, term Florentine mosaic,) which is witnessed in St. Mark's. I went thither one December morning, with the sun shining, and spent the whole day in straggling amid the ruins. As no rhymer has celebrated this place, I shall, in the absence of a better poet, perhaps be excused for embodying the event of my expedition in a sonnet.

I, on a wintry morn, nor dim nor dark,
  But while a bright and kindly sun outshone,
  (Such as in southern clime is seen alone,)
From Venice for Torcello steered my bark:

There cots I saw, 'mid palaces o'erthrown,
  And wasted vineyard, garden, close, or park;
  And there an older fane than thine, St. Mark,
With door and shutters framed of solid stone.

While 'mid that fortress-church and ruined bower,
  And standing hut, I roved, well pleased to range,
A clock struck twenty from an ancient tower.

Time, changing all, himself had known no change;
  But told, as to another age, the hour,*
Warning his little world in language strange.

* When I was in Italy, the old mode of counting the day, from sunset to sunset, was discontinued throughout the north, and only used by ecclesiastical bodies in the south. Our mode

ıet was provoked by another singular contrast between times past and present, and somewhat less dignified, *videlicet*, the sight of an Austrian soldier, smoking his *écume de mer* pipe amid the ruins of Murrano.* *Eccolo!*

of reckoning, which had been long partially used in the Italian peninsula, would seem to have been introduced by the Spaniards: for we see the time of action indicated in the title-page of plays of some standing, by the style of *Tempo di Spagna.*

* Murrano is also a small island, situated not far from Venice.

'Tis strange, how often in our saddest mood,
  When least we deem the mind could entertain
  Thoughts, ill according with its present vein,
Some laughter-moving image will intrude.

Smoking in meerschum-bole of many a stain,
  I saw, with heavy look and posture rude,
  An Austrian 'mid Murrano's solitude:
Yet, though I viewed in him that island's bane,

In very truth, no curse escaped from me,
  Marking that scene of ruin, filth, and dearth;
I smiled at thinking man and pipe should be

So fitly matched, (poor argument for mirth)
  This, as its name imports, the scum of sea,
That, as his actions show, the scum of earth.

Having observed, in a former part of this article, how very inobservant we are of men and things in foreign countries, I may add that this remark may be extended to our views of

and any body who has bestowed pains on that of any one country will see how grossly ignorant most of those are who pretend to a proficiency in it. Two or three examples, which may be verified by any one who takes the trouble of examination, will, I think, justify this conclusion. One of the best poems which we have in our language is Fairfax's translation of Tasso; which is, however, very loose, and contains many mistakes; I do not

mean such as will occasionally be made by all translators; but such as spring from an imperfect comprehension of the original. Yet, is this work cried up as a perfect translation as well as a fine poem; and Mr. Hume, who pretends to conversance with foreign literature, in praising its correctness, tells us that it is translated line for line; whereas Fairfax has not even affected to translate it stanza for stanza.

My next is a much stronger instance; for never was stronger testimony borne to the merit of a translator, than the encouragement bestowed, almost in our own time, upon Hoole, the *doer* into English of the *two* epic poets of

his study of the language. Among mistakes too frequent to recapitulate, (for they deform almost every page,) in a part, where Ariosto alludes to the Italian wars, he translates *i Viscontei colubri*, or the snakes of the Viscontis, *Calabria's Earls*. Yet who were the successful *prôneurs* of this work but Dr. Johnson, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Mr. Topham Beauclerk, and all the wits and scholars of that most eminent society? Nor was the patronage of Hoole's version of

the *Orlando Furioso* and the *Gerusalemme Liberata* confined to literary men—they had, and have still, a sale unexampled in bookselling history.

language, it will hardly be expected, that they should be very conversant with its prosody. We accordingly find that a critic who had made a considerable study of its poetry, imagined, its combinations of vowels, as in *auro* and *sciolto*, were diphthongal: from which it is clear, that he must have mistaken the character, and lost the principal charm, of that varied rhythm, which makes Italian poetry so much resemble Italian music. This

sort of hill-and-dale versification is very remarkable in our older poets, from Shakspeare to Milton; who all, mediately or immediately, formed themselves upon southern models. There is, however, a common mistake, with respect to this style of rhythm, which is common even among the better informed. They suppose it to be only used in blank verse; but if they would look to the two authors I have mentioned, they would see that they made frequent use of it in their ten-syllable-rhymed verse, as well. Thus, Shakspeare says,

"Be resolute, bold and bloody, laugh to scorn, &c."

Milton is so fond of it, that he uses it even in his sonnets, and his five first,

if modern, would be censured by some critics as unscannable. I select these to show that I am not arguing from rare instances.

SONNET I.

While the jolly hours lead on propitious May.

II.

That some more timely happy spirits endueth,

III.

The house of Pindarus, when temple and tower

IV.

No anger find in thee but pity and ruth

V.

At Chæronea, fatal to liberty.

Whether such lines, as some of these are, should be introduced into so short and polished a composition as the sonnet, may be a matter of doubt; but, I think, there is reason as well as example, for their insertion in long poems, which often weary the ear by their monotonous smoothness and regularity of cadence. Italians, conversant with English, object to us this smoothness of surface in our later poets, and Milton seems to be a favourite with them, for his absence of elision and his fondness for tribrachs. They object to us as well the uniformity of our more modern rhymes, and seem to have a justification of this censure in the contrary practice of all the nations in Europe besides

Some English critics have censured him for another peculiarity, which is, no doubt, as well a recommendation to Italians; I mean his naturalization of Latin and Italian words; yet it should be recollected, that our language is composed of these, as well as of Teutonic vocables, that it seems to admit elements of a very different nature; that *Bacon*, *Hooker*, &c. &c. employed such as are objected to

happily; and that Dr. Johnson, the very leader of these objectors, is the man who has most extravagantly pushed this experiment of giving citizenship to Latin vocables.

Were I to object to any foreign practice of Milton, it would be to that of occasionally violating the spirit of the English grammar and adopting that of a foreign one, without any great temptation, as in the following verses,

——————"Then shall this mount
Of Paradise by might of waves be moved:
Out of *his* place pushed by the horned flood,
With all *his* verdure spoiled and trees adrift, &c."

Such or any other errors that may be found in him, however, are small

For there is scarcely a phrase of his but what may be weighed and tried by the rules of common sense, an indispensable beauty in a poet who would write for posterity. This correctness of diction, which has been so studied by him and the other greatest masters, generally characterizes our good poets, but seems to have been occasionally neglected by some of very high pretensions. The laborious Gray, for instance, has

again in

"And gorgeous *dames* and statesmen old
In *bearded* majesty appear."

Dryden, though deservedly famous for his English, whether in verse or prose, is also one of those great poets who have sometimes violated grammar and propriety. Of the violation of the rules of grammar, as they relate to relative and antecedent, (which cannot always be observed even in prose,) and such matters, I should think little, if it did not include the violation of

propriety; but it is too much to sin against both. Take as an example,

"Changed his hand and checked his pride,"

meaning, that he changed his own hand and checked another's pride. This was a wilful mistake; but he seems sometimes to blunder out of bounds.

Thus, he translates Virgil's

"Optat aprum aut fulvum descendere monte leonem,"

"*He hopes the boar, &c.*

That is, he hopes the boar *absolutely;* not he hopes that the boar, &c., will descend from the mountain. Here it is curious to see how perversely a precedent for poetical expression is

often created and established. It was but a slight extension of the licence to "hope the bear;" and accordingly, in his *Palamon and Arcite*, we have

"So stands the Thracian herdsman with his spear
Full in the gap, and *hopes the hunted bear*."

Pope caught the echo of this extravagant phrase, and, in his *Windsor Forest*, we read

"With eyes intent *he hopes the scaly breed*"—

Such was the birth and progress of a received poetical expression, originating in a mistake; and so this mistranslation, and transformation of a verb neuter into a verb active, not only finds acceptance,

"*sed honorem et præmia poscit*."

A more curious instance of the perversion of a poetical expression, originally good, but inappropriate in its application, is to be found in *Lara*, one of the best of Lord Byron's poems. Having in his memory Pope's

> "lives along the line"—

he talks about Lara's stream

> "Reflecting bright and fairy-like from high
> The thousand lights that *live along* the sky."

degrading the poet's exquisite picture of the vitality of the spider extending to her remotest toils, into a question of scot-and-lot habitancy, as the Anti-Jacobin has it, most vulgarly expressed; and this applied to stars! The extravagance of this was brought home to

me by an accident. A distinguished foreigner, not unskilled in English, and very deeply imbued with our more classical literature, desired me to read one of Lord Byron's poems with him, and I selected Lara, not as the best, though it is beautiful, but as the correctest, in matter of diction. My friend was, however, soon aground, and totally unable to unriddle the meaning of

"The thousand lights which live along the sky."

He desired me to construe it; which I did with the best equivalents I could find; but the critic, who had listened with all his ears, stared with all his eyes, at my interpretation.

Whoever considers Lord Byron's

works carefully, will find many such blots. This may do, as I have said, in his own age, with those who understood him, or think that they understood him; but will another age, that may perhaps look for good English, and probably will have substituted some new cant for that which is popular at present, in such cases as I have specified, appreciate his figures or tolerate his idiom?

Now, that Lord Byron *has* owed much of his success to his poetry being peculiarly adapted to the taste and temper of the present race, which was standing on tiptoes to admire, is put out of doubt by Madame Belloc's

one that has taste of j

ON GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND EXCEPTIONS.

A STORY is told of a suicide who assigned as a reason for killing himself, that life consisted in nothing but dressing and undressing. A somewhat better ground (though I do not mean to assign *this* as a reasonable one) might be found in the position that life is spent in nothing but learning and unlearning. We set out with acquiring a thousand old women's prejudices, as well as many truths, which we *believe* to be prejudices; next (however slowly we may arrive at this point) learn to doubt, and, afterwards, to despise them. We

mong the abstract opinions which almost universally take up, is the assumption of moral causes to the exclusion of physical ones, and foremost among these, the conclusion that individual character depends purely upon moral, and not upon physical, causes. Machiavel, however, a man singularly wise in his generation, has laboured (I think successfully) to prove the dependence of the mind upon physical causes, in his observations on race, and

THE INDELIBILITY OF NATIONAL CHARACTER.

I THINK experience shows that this is only modified when we believe it to be changed. What is true of men collectively, will be true of men individually; and thus, though character may lie, for a generation or more, in abeyance, we see in the son many of the same mental as well as physical qualities which distinguished the ancestor. Those who cannot deny the transmission of physical dispositions, will nevertheless explain mental resem-

[redacted]

THE HABITS OF ANIMALS.

But if moral qualities be hereditary in animals, it is surely natural that they should be so in men. Now every one, conversant with beasts, knows that not only their natural but that many of their acquired qualities are transmitted by the parents to their offspring. Perhaps the most curious example of the latter fact may be found in the Pointer.

This animal is endowed with the natural instinct of winding game, and stealing upon his prey, which he sur-

be as much pleased at seeing the rd or beast drop by the shooter's gun, as at taking it himself. The staunchest dog of this kind, and the original pointer, is of Spanish origin, and our own is derived from this race, crossed with that of the fox-hound or other breed of dog, for the sake of improving his speed. This mixed and factitious race of course naturally partakes less of the true pointer character; that is to say, is less disposed to stop, or at least, he makes a shorter stop at game.

The factitious pointer is, however, disciplined, in this country, into staunchness; and, what is most singular, this quality is, in a great degree, inherited by his puppy, who may be seen earnestly standing at swallows or pigeons in a farm-yard. For intuition, though it leads the offspring to exercise his parent's faculties, does not instruct him how to direct them. The preference of his master afterwards guides him in his selection, and teaches him what game is better worth pursuit. On the other hand, the pointer of pure Spanish race, unless he happens to be well broke himself, which in the south of Europe seldom happens, produces a race which are all but unteachable,

ch education has formed in this
ntry, and has rendered, as I have
said, in some degree, capable of transmitting his acquirements to his descendants.

Acquired habits are hereditary in other animals besides dogs. English sheep, probably from the greater richness of our pastures, feed very much together; while Scotch sheep are obliged to extend and scatter themselves over their hills for the better

discovery of food. Yet the English sheep, on being transferred to Scotland, keep their old habit of feeding in a mass, though so little adapted to their new country: so do their descendants: and the English sheep is not thoroughly naturalized into the necessities of his place till the third generation. The same thing may be observed as to the nature of his food, that is observed in his mode of seeking it. When turnips were introduced from England into Scotland, it was only the third generation, which heartily adopted this diet, the first having been starved into an acquiescence in it. In the same manner it required some years to establish the English practice of bringing up

was [illegible]

ishment (slowly and reluctantly admitted by lowland calves) ever, I believe, cordially adopted by their mountain kindred. The highland beast has shown himself the worthy imitator of the highland man, and is as obstinate in his opposition to this, as his Celtic master is to any other, Saxon improvement which can be offered to him.

If habits then are hereditary in animals, we may fairly suppose those, which are transmitted from father to

son, among men, are, like those of beasts, rather the result of hereditary instinct than of education.

There are those, however, who allow the fact of habits distinctive of race in individuals being hereditary, who deny that this applies equally to nations; and I know many who maintain a supposed change of disposition in the French, as exemplified in their revolution, to be a complete refutation of Machiavel's assertion respecting the immutability of national character. But the Frenchman's character, has, in my view of things, undergone no essential alteration, however it may have been modified. The national vanity, which formerly prompted him to cry *Vive le*

While, however, we have seen the Frenchman's passions, although unaltered, taking new channels during the revolution, we have seen all his characteristic qualities survive a shock by which one should have naturally supposed they would have been annihilated. The most striking of these, and which was most likely to have suffered a change, is that

NATIONAL POLITENESS,

WHICH above all things distinguishes the people. This has again emerged from the thunder-cloud which obscured it for a moment; and after all the drunken excesses of Jacobinism, it is impossible to find oneself in Paris (as a friend once observed to me) without being conscious that one is in the capital of the most polished nation in Europe. No license, unless on some political occasion, is ever taken by the mob; no injury is ever done to public monuments nor even any innocent extravagance in-

ret where such are not to be seen, ney of diaper or dowlass, silver or pewter; while, at all decent inns and hotels, they are of damask and silver. Go to a *guingette*, and, in a promiscuous assemblage of both sexes of the lower orders, you will see every thing conducted with decorum. The spectator will find the same appearances of modesty and discretion which distinguish the assemblies of the drawing-room; nor will he ever hear a

word, or witness an action, which militates against propriety. This diffusion of politeness through all ranks, and almost as remarkable among the lowest as among the highest, excluding always mere conventional points of refinement, is the more remarkable, because it does not exist in other European nations. Yet a greater internal commerce in some (as in England) would render such a diffusion of civilization more explicable.

This confinement of certain delicacies of life to a certain cast is therefore unintelligible to Frenchmen not minutely acquainted with our customs, and often leads them into extravagant

ent, who asked me to visit him in *hateau*, if I should ever find myself in its neighbourhood. I profited by this invitation on the ratification of the second peace, and found him, with his family and parish priest, just returned from England, whither he had emigrated during the fury of the revolution. Addressing himself to this person, my host observed, "You see these messieurs (meaning me and another Englishman) do not eat with their

knives."—"All Englishmen that I ever saw, do," replied the priest; and I was appealed to in order to settle the question, which had apparently been agitated between the two, each reasoning from their respective experiences. I began by asking the priest where he had lived in London; and being informed that he had boarded with a family in St. Martin's Lane, told the *Seigneur*, that I had no doubt the *Curé* was correct in his report, as far as regarded his personal observation. His astonishment was extreme.

I have said that the same general diffusion of refinement is not to be found in the other nations of Europe; but it

iscussing.) than in the Florentine
icentine provinces of Italy; both
pre-eminent for their docility, industry,
and refinement. Nothing indeed can
be more striking to a stranger than the
existence of a national character in
these provinces, entirely distinct from
that of the other tribes by which they
are bounded, and differing most from
those with which they are in most im-
mediate contact. We see something
like this at home in the distinction

which is discernible in the Scotch and English, where only separated by an imaginary line. Here, however, a diversity in religion and civil government may explain the thing; but in one of the two instances which I have adduced, to wit, that of the Vicentine province, no moral causes offer a solution of the difficulty. The Vicentine district *is*, as every one knows, and *has been* for ages, an integral part of the Venetian dominions, professing the same religion and governed by the same laws as the other continental provinces of Venice. Yet the English character is not more different from the French than that of the Vicentine from the Paduan; while the contrast be-

s, the Roman and the Bolognese, of whom are conspicuously rude, idle, and turbulent. How the Vicentine and Tuscan characters were formed it is difficult to conjecture; but it is clear that they have, under very singular circumstances, preserved their natural elements, however acquired.

Talent is what *apparently* suffers most change in national character; but here again, if we examine the question closely, we shall find that what we

take for a change is in fact only a modification: for there is no quality of man that adapts itself to circumstances so readily as his intellectual faculty, which usually undergoes the same process, in every country, when acted upon by similar causes. Observe, for instance, the intellectual character of different nations, and it will be found that poetry precedes prose in all of them; and this will, in the same way, be exemplified in the history of

ch invariably precedes wit, *et sic ceteris*. It is a common remark that the French have no perception of humour, and that this makes a negative part of their character. I should rather say that this absence of humour was incidental to a later state of society in France, than that it was really distinctive of the national character. For there are few more humorous compositions than are to be met with in French, and one of these, the *Romant Comique*, was published at no distant

period. Rabelais alone might redeem the nation from the charge. Is then the intellectual character of the people changed? I say it is not; but that the imaginative faculty, which anciently, when taking a gay colouring, showed itself in humour, in a more refined period displays itself in wit; for I cannot look upon these two as absolutely distinct qualities, and draw the line of demarcation with which many would separate them. For me, I look upon humour as the raw material, and wit as the manufactured article, and really believe this is as exact a definition as illustration will afford. What has taken place in France, is now taking place at home. Humour is disappearing from

ot indeed better illustrate this posi-
than by citing the little impression
made by a poem, (now entitled, *The Monks and the Giants*,) published under the name of Whistlecraft, a work having at least a foreign precedent for
its extravagance, in the Italians'

SERIO-COMIC POETRY;

OR, what is denominated by them, *la poesia bernesca.* The cavilling question which has been generally made to the work, which has furnished my illustration, has always been, "What does it mean?—What does it point at?" Might not this query be put with equal, or with more, justice, to the works of Aristophanes, of Rabelais or of Sterne? The nature of the question proves, that a work of humour was ill bestowed upon an age, which could only see drollery in what appeared to have some

ıks and the Giants" have been appreciated, by the majority of readers.

Yet those who will only laugh upon a sufficient warrant, may, on analyzing this bravura-poem, find legitimate matter for their mirth. The want of meaning cannot certainly be objected to it, with reason; for it contains a deep substratum of sense, and does not exhibit a character, which has not, or might not, have its parallel in nature.

I remember at the time this poem was published, which was, when the French monarchy seemed endangered by the vacillating conduct of the late king, who, under the guidance of successive ministers, was trimming between the loyalists and the liberals, apparently thinking that civility and conciliation was a remedy for all evils, a friend dared me to prove my assertion; and, by way of a text, referred me to the character of the crippled abbot, under whose direction,

The convent was all going to the devil,
While he, poor creature, thought himself beloved
For saying handsome things and being civil,
Wheeling about as he was pulled and shoved.

the intrinsic truth of the descrip-
Take in the same way, the cha-
racter of Sir Tristram, and we shall find
its elements, if not in one, in different
living persons.

XVIII.

Songs, music, languages and many a lay
Asturian, or Armoric, Irish, Basque
His ready memory seized and bore away;
And ever when the ladies chose to ask,
Sir Tristram was prepared to sing and play,
Not like a minstrel, earnest at his task,
But with a sportive, careless, easy style,
As if he seemed to mock himself the while.

XIX.

His ready wit and rambling education
With the congenial influence of his stars
Had taught him all the arts of conversation,
All games of skill, and stratagems of wars;
His birth, it seems, by Merlin's calculation,
Was under Venus, Mercury, and Mars:
His mind with all their attributes was mixt,
And, like those planets, wand'ring and unfixt.

Who can read this description, without recognizing in it, the portraits (flattering portraits perhaps) of two military characters well known in society?

Notwithstanding that this species of composition is of such recent date in our language, its introduction is more usually ascribed to Lord Byron than to Mr. Frere; whereas Mr. Frere's Monks and Giants, (first published as

great improver of the fruit, but Mr. Tennant was the original importer. As a proof of this, I extract a single stanza from his Anster Fair.

Her form was as the morning's blithesome star,
That, capt with lustrous coronet of beams,
Rides up the dawning orient in her car,
New-washed and doubly fulgent from the streams;
The Chaldee Shepherd eyes her light afar,
And on his knees adores her as she gleams;
So shone the stately form of Maggie Lauder,
And so the admiring crowds pay homage and applaud her."—St. XIII.

Mr. Frere, however, was not a man to be a servile imitator; besides what was furnished from his own stores, he has drawn from more than one well-head in the land which gave birth to this species of poetry; and has profited both by Pulci and Berni among the Italians.

The objection to this style of humour, in an age like our own, seems not only to be, that the public is often little disposed to entertain, but that few are qualified to cultivate, it: of this we have a striking example in the Italian followers of Berni. Thus, though an Englishman has succeeded so happily in the attempt, Forteguerri

are lost sight of by later authors.
s, if we look to Aristophanes or
to Rabelais, we shall always find a
vein of truth running under their
extravagance. The vapouring bully,
personified in Bacchus, who is, as the
French term it, only brave *jusqu'à
dégaîner*, hesitates, when he gets to
Hercules' door, and, having consulted
with his servant how he should knock,
determines to do it in an imposing
manner, and almost beats down the

door with his thunder. Panurge, who has received from Pantagruel the quit-rents of the periwinkles and cockle-shells, which are described as of very fluctuating value, but who lives as if it was always to be a good periwinkle and cockle-shell year, typifies the west Indian proprietor, or any one living on an uncertain income, who always measures this by hopes, rather than by probabilities, &c., &c., &c. I do not mean to say, that the describers of these characters necessarily adopted such a system as I suppose, upon principle; but that they acted upon it, whether consciously or unconsciously. The person who plays by ear, conforms to the laws of harmony and melody,

the steps of these originals have nothing but the extravagance of their prototypes, and neglected the precept which Dante, and afterwards Berni, inculcates in

Mirate la dottrina che s'asconde
Sotto il velame de le cose strane.

It is thus that the poem of Ricciardetto, written in imitation of the *Innamorato*, &c. contains only a series of ridiculous adventures, and of caricatures, which are insipid, because they

bear no likeness to any real or supposable thing.*

The author of the *Animali Parlanti* is not guilty of this blunder, but sins against all probability and consistence in another respect.

As a comic effect is produced by an apparent similitude between dissimilar things, there is something very entertaining in well devised *Fable*, which attributes to beasts the actions and the dispositions of men. But the Fabler,

* *Ricciardetto* may however pretend to one merit. It is written in pure, though not energetic language, and in this appears a singular contrast to the *Animali Parlanti*, which is an olio of Lombardisms, Venetianisms, and Gallicisms.

in giving them these attributes, must adapt them in some degree to their *beastly* nature, and in this lies the principal charm of such a species of composition. This is particularly exemplified in the story of the Crane, who, having asked the Fox to supper and given him his soup in a long-necked vessel, is repaid in the same coin by the Fox, who, on inviting her in his turn, serves up *his* in a flat pan. Here we have the passions of men represented in actions which are not inappropriate to the forms or habits of the animals which represent them. Casti has entirely lost sight of this throughout the *Animali Parlanti*, employing his beasts in things entirely foreign from their

habits, and attributing to them actions which are obviously impossible. Thus we have animals equipped with cocked hats, and are wearied with long details of such impossible toilets. One more instance will show how entirely neglectful he was of the proprieties observed by Æsop. Having described the Dog as perorating to an assembly of beasts, and next pausing to watch the impression which he had made upon his auditory, he says,

'Ciò detto, spurgò.'

id est,

This said, he spat.

better rendered in the *Court of Beasts*, by

This said, he *scratched*.

e is worse than a long epigram, can in no case be justifiable. For however well the story told and the thing done may be imagined and contrived, we could not long contemplate even such pictures as Æsop represents without being startled by their impossibility. Such paintings are only fitted for a magic lanthorn, and brevity may be considered as the soul of fable.

The author of *The Monks and the Giants* has not committed any errors

of the kind which I have described; and if the poem be not fairly appreciated, its failure must be attributed rather to the indisposition of the reader to this species of composition than to the incapacity of the author.

If he has distinguished himself in imitation, he has not been less happy in

A LABOUR, the difficulty of which is little estimated. A friend of mine once observed to me, I thought, with much justice, that he considered a translator as very like a rope-dancer; in that he exercised a difficult and dangerous trade, in which to succeed was to earn little credit, and to fall was to peril life and limb. Taking the benefit of this simile, I may say that it is marvellous to observe what *tours de force* the author of *the Monks and the Giants* has achieved, without

making a false step, in his translation of Aristophanes, and painful to think that he will hardly receive a better reward for it than that obtained by the man who climbed the spire of Salisbury cathedral; to wit, the exclusive exercise of such a faculty with the pain of death denounced against whoever should invade his monopoly.*

One of the difficulties attending this art of translation is the absolute impossibility of laying down rules for its execution; for I can never consider that of translating by equivalents as

* Mr. Mitchell has, however, followed his great leader with much dexterity in his version of Aristophanes.

applicable in all cases. I conceive not only that there is no rule applicable to all authors, but that there is no rule applicable to all parts of the same author, and believe, though the principle of translating by equivalents be the best general rule, that it is (where applicable) one of great difficulty, and requiring singular dexterity in him who employs it.

Mr. Frere's great merit lies in his exquisite management of this instrument. He finds some good English coin to represent the sterling silver of his author, and (what is infinitely more difficult) has some correspondent small change for the lowest and basest money

which Aristophanes palms upon us. The instance of a version of a poor joke, but the merit of which lies in its characteristic silliness, may well serve as a specimen. Bacchus evidently finding his courage desert him on his arrival in the lower regions, and wishing to conciliate Charon, but at the same time to mask his condescension by a jest, as a test of being at his ease, exclaims, "Χαιρε Χαιρων!" which the English translator renders by "Have a *care*, good *Char*on."

On the other hand, while Mr. Frere is happy in finding English terms and idioms for foreign phraseology, he never destroys the charm by introduc-

as [illegible] that they constantly give false impressions of what they pretend to convey in all the purity of importation. Dryden, who is, at once, one of the best and worst translators, however eminent as a poet, is constantly committing this error, and is almost as often applauded for it; because the mob of men like better what speaks to their vulgar associations, than what is consistent with propriety and truth. It is thus that he says, when speaking of the emascu-

lated priests of Cybele celebrating orgies about their idol,

> " Her *clumsy clergymen* around her prance,
> " And to the music of their cymbals dance."

Now is not this a thing scarcely to be addrest to the one shilling gallery, and does it not give a most perverted idea of the picture, presented us by Juvenal?

Pope has failed in the same manner, though not in the same degree as Dryden, in his version of Homer. An admirable painter of *passion*, he gives us, in his loose but vigorous translation, the sentiments, if not the words, of his heroes, and the mere

t ought to be delineated, he never i es the picturesque and precise touches of his master's pencil, but, making a sort of china-screen drawing, dazzles the eye with the glaring wash with which he overspreads it.

Now this may serve to illustrate my observation, that not only no system is applicable to translation in general; but that no system is even applicable to the same translation; for if Pope had rendered the sentimental parts of

Homer freely, and the descriptive closely, he would probably have given birth to the best, as well as the most brilliant, version of an ancient author which had ever been produced.

Other objections may be made to Pope and Dryden in their Iliad and Odyssey and Æneid, as neither well conversant with the languages from which they translate, nor acquainted with the character of the countries which are described. Both, I believe, talk about "heaping the glittering *canisters* with bread," and Dryden has perched the grasshopper (instead of the *cicala)* upon shrubs. Even the accurate Warton, in his translation of

v n only a personal knowledge of the c s which he navigates can enable the translator to avoid. Thus,

——————" Hic ubi densas
Agricolæ stringunt frondes, hic Mœri canamus;"

he translates,

Here, Mœris, where the swains *thick branches prune,*
And strew their leaves, our voices let us tune;

which would be more correctly rendered,

Where the thick leaves are stript by peasant swains,
Here, Mœris, let us sit and tune our strains.

These lines are explained by a common practice in the Mantuan province, and indeed throughout the north; probably throughout the whole of Italy, of stripping the leaves from the trees as food for cattle. Warton explains his interpolation by an ill-founded conjecture, and says in a note that "the epithet *densas* seems to point to amputation, which they wanted by growing too thick."

It is to be regretted, as was observed in the beginning of this article, that so little credit is to be obtained by the

spirit. Moreover, he may be a efactor to his language, and more especially to our own, which, being as composite as the race who use it, readily gives naturalization to foreign terms. If, indeed, he is without that religious feeling for his own language, which ought to animate him, he may pollute it (as Spenser has done*) by his intermixtures for a time; but for-

* By the introduction of such words as *spals* (spalle), meaning shoulders, &c. &c.

tunately the mischief will not remain; for our language, like some other happy parts of our establishment, has the faculty of working itself clear.

THE END.

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